

Repeal the Fourth Of July

The following message, dated August 1776, has somewhat anachronistically been released to the world media. It was addressed to colonials in America who had just issued their provocative and untimely declaration of independence.

To the Secessionary Colonists in America:

Your friends and supporters from afar send their warm good wishes in your time of national trial and personal suffering.

We sympathize with your desire to be free and independent. We find much to agree with in your presentation of facts to a candid world.

However, the action taken by your representatives in general congress assembled on July 4 is precipitate and unwise. If you have, as you suggest, "a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind," you will rescind or revoke this unilateral declaration at once, or at the very least suspend it in such a way to make it meaningless.

Please understand that we take no position on the merits of your case for independency. Certainly the grievances you listed in great detail — which you see as causes that impelled you to Separation — touch the heart. (However, one must remember that you have spent many years in the past under British rule.)

Our message to you is purely practical. Your timing is poorly chosen. Seventeen seventy-six is the worst possible year in which to declare independence.

Although King George III has his shortcomings in the economic sphere, your "tea party" in Boston Harbor was a sensationalist and unfair derogation of his tax policy. He is a force for stability and order at a terribly turbulent time.

We happen to know that his court at St. James's Palace contains more than a few "hard linings." The red-coat generals are restive. If these sinister forces gain the upper hand in the struggle for power, latent English national feelings will be ignited and

American
colonials:
Rethink your
ill-timed
declaration!

the full force of the empire's irritation will be directed against your legitimate aspirations.

If you fail to undeclare your declaration of July 4, you will find yourself bereft of allies. Moral support feeds no hungry bellies.

Do not be misled by the passionate words of the Marquis de Lafayette and other foreign provocateurs; they are trying to play "the American card" against the British supposedly on behalf of France. In the end, you will be forced to stand alone.

Do you have any idea what it is like to be alone in the world, with not only imperial power but the Opinion of Mankind against you? Do you know how cold the winter gets in Valley Forge?

What sort of Thanksgiving can you look forward to after fuel and food supplies have been cut off by Lord Cornwallis, and helpful Hessians take the field? Think what your untimely intransigence is doing to your own people.

Think of others, too. If George III lets the American colonies go, what of the rest of the Empire? Indeed — and here it gets deeply troubling — what of Scotland and Wales and Ireland? Do you suppose, if you go your merry way, they will ever form a "great" Britain?

If the colonies go, what about Europe? The spirit of independency is contagious; if you can presume to act "by the authority of the good people of these Colonies," who is to say that the selfish determination of this mobocracy will not have repercussions in France and elsewhere?

Therefore, we urge you to be reasonable. George III, as revisionists will surely show centuries hence, is not crazy; he has good instincts that must be nourished. Help him help you. Do not embarrass him or incite him to violence, which would embarrass us.

Wait and see: in five years, if you ask Parliament for permission to be independent, two-thirds might vote to set you free, against England's interests. (If George is still there; if Parliament is there. Should some other force be in charge, you will have lost your last chance, but you will have made a glorious contribution toward stability.)

Toujours la stabilité! Consider always das grosse Bild! Do not be selfish, American colonials — overturn the hasty decision of July 4. Let your proudly pragmatic descendants celebrate instead August 17, 1776 — the day cool-headed American patriots undeclared independence.

By temporarily submitting your stiff necks to the yoke of oppression; by subordinating nationalist temptations to the greater good of global expediency; by passing a ringing Resolution of Second Thoughts, you will induce pragmatists everywhere to pledge to you our lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor. □